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News in brief

MOSI looks to the future

Manchester's Museum of Science and Industry (MOSI) has unveiled a new multi-million pound gallery, which it hopes will act as a hub for the region's industrial heritage.

Revolution Manchester aims to bring key developments in the north west's history to life, using the latest interactive technology, and showcase how Manchester and the north led the world in manufacturing, transport, energy, computing and communications.

Essence

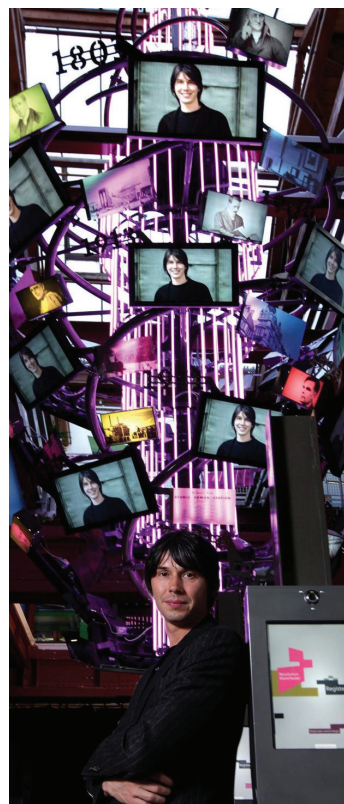
The seven-month project is part of a £9 million redevelopment programme to improve the visitor experience at MOSI, with stairwells, lifts and access ramps relocated on the outside of the main warehouse to accommodate a new foyer, cafe, gift shop, learning space and conference suite. Revolution Manchester forms the new route into the museum and curator John Beckerson hopes it will orient visitors into the site's exhibitions proper, as well as to other heritage venues across the region.

"This is a big museum and previously a lot of visitors didn't know where to start or what they might find, so we wanted to capture MOSI's essence in one place," Beckerson said.

"The gallery operates on several levels depending on the time or level of interest you have, and points visitors outwards as well as inwards."

Birthplace

As well as sign posting more specialised industrial sites like Bolton Steam Museum and Styal's Quarry Bank Mill, the gallery goes some way to filling a perceived gap at the birthplace of the revolution. Despite its drive to become a world tourist destination, Manchester has never had a museum dedicated to its own history, and MOSI's text-heavy Making of



TV's Professor Brian Cox visits MOSI
Photo: Guzelian

Manchester galleries, which pre-date the 1996 IRA bomb, were doing little to fill the hole.

Revolution Manchester uses the country's biggest indoor LCD screen, interactive displays and key artefacts from MOSI's collection to bring the pioneering past to life. Entering the gallery visitors are greeted by a 26-screen digital chandelier, displaying their photo alongside portraits of historical innovators – part of a barcode registration system allowing punters to capture data from the exhibits and interactives to view online when they get home.

"We wanted to create a dialogue, not a broadcast that stops when you leave," said Kevin Palmer, director of designers, Kin. "MOSI has been criticised before for being really good at celebrating the industrial past but less so at

embracing the future, so our remit was to come up with a more exciting, engaging and modern gallery.

Pressure

"We didn't want to alienate MOSI's existing visitors but were keen to tell the stories of the past in new ways, especially for kids who might find it hard to relate to aspects of the industrial revolution. The area has an amazing history which is full of world firsts, from the industrial revolution to MediaCity, and we wanted to inspire kids into thinking they could be part of the next big thing."

Apart from its special exhibitions MOSI is free to enter, so the Department for Culture Media and Sport's recent announcement that it will remove its support (around 80 per cent of MOSI's income) in 2014/15 has intensified pressure to generate revenue. Having already set up a fundraising department, however, the museum is positive about diversification, and has designed the new gallery to attract party-planners and corporate clients as well as a projected one million visitors a year.

Romance

"First and foremost this is a museum space, and the screen will run animations, visitor vox pops and pop-up exhibitions," said Palmer. "But we were conscious that it be a revenue-generating space too, and the media wall will be an ideal canvas for all kinds of social and corporate events."

For curator John Beckerson the impetus for the new gallery is a little more romantic. "We want to say: This is Manchester, this is the north west, and these are some of our achievements," he said. "Past, present and future."

JO NIGHTINGALE

LIFE SKILLS

The parents of terminally children can take part in free caring workshops. Edge Hill University and Derian House Children's Hospice have won Department of Health funding for the pioneering series of sessions. Many incurable conditions require a high level of support, which is often provided by family within the home. The workshops will refresh or develop new skills in range of areas, from basic life support to different kinds of feeding. One session is reserved for brothers and sisters aged 12 to 16.

WHO CARES

Leeds Council is seeking views on how older people's care should be delivered. A consultation is underway and ends in April. The number of people aged over 65 will rise by 86 per cent by 2050. Half of older women and a third of older men will eventually need care, putting a strain on services. Proposals include closing some council-run residential homes and commissioning more beds in the independent sector. To take part, visit www.leeds.gov.uk.

MAXIMUM CITY

Liverpool's City of Radicals year kicked off with a tribute to a socialist hero. Last week was the centenary of social commentator Robert Tressell, who wrote the seminal *The Ragged Trousered Philanthropists* and passed away in the city in 1911. City of Radicals marks 100 years since Liverpool was at the height of its influence. Events included a transport strike which alarmed the government so much it sent a warship to the Mersey.

BRASS MONKEYS

Pupils can test trumpets, tubas and trombones thanks to the pooling of resources. Budding musicians from Wythenshawe, Manchester, get limited chances to play but a joint session for primary schools could become a regular occurrence. Cllr Sheila Newman, of Manchester Council, said: "This is a pilot, but ideally we would like to see it continue – it makes perfect financial sense to pool resources."